

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSYMBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 1784

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BC, RH

SUBJECT: GOB OFFICIALS' VIEWS CONCERNING NAMIBIA INITIATIVES

AND POSSIBLE RHODESIAN "INTERNAL SETTLEMENT"

REF: GABORONE 1676

1. SUMMARY: HERewith IS A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF A DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO RESPONSIBLE GOB OFFICIALS, IN WHICH THEY PRAISED THE FIVE-POWER INITIATIVE ON NAMIBIA, INDICATED THAT THE GOB WOULD ULTIMATELY WELCOME AN "INTERNAL SETTLEMENT" BASED ON FREE ELECTIONS IN RHODESIA, EXPRESSED DISTRUST OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, AND SAW NYERERE AS HAVING MADE A COMPLETE REVERSAL FROM HIS FORMER SUPPORT FOR THE PF. WE BELIEVE NYERERE'S SHIFT CLEARLY IS THE NEW ELEMENT WHICH MADE POSSIBLE THIS RATHER SURPRISING CONVERSATION. END SUMMARY.

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2. AT DINNER PARTY AT CHARGE'S RESIDENCE AUGUST 4, PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY LEGWAILA AND MINEXTAFF DEPUTY SECRETARY MOGAMI ENGAGED IN A LONG, AFTER-DINNER CONVERSATION, VIRTUALLY A DIALOGUE, ON THE NAMIBIA AND RHODESIA SITUATIONS.

3. NAMIBIA: BOTH OFFICIALS EXPRESSED ADMIRATION FOR

THE FIVE-POWER EFFORTS. THEY LAUGHED AT SAM NUJOMA'S APPELLATION OF THE FIVE POWERS AS "THE GANG OF FIVE", AND INDICATED THAT THEY THOUGHT NUJOMA COULD BE BROUGHT ALONG, HIS TRUCULENT STANCE NOTWITHSTANDING. LEGWAILA THOUGHT THE FIVE WERE USING VERY GOOD JUDGMENT IN PUSHING VORSTER AS FAR AND AS FAST AS THEY COULD, BUT NOT SO FAST OR FAR AS TO "DRIVE HIM INTO THE LAAGER".

4. RHODESIA: LEGWAILA WAS PARTICULARLY ARTICULATE IN HIS PRAISE OF THE ANGLO-US INITIATIVE, WHICH HE SAW BUILDING ON THE QUANTUM BREAKTHROUGH IN SMITH'S POSITION MADE LAST YEAR AS THE RESULT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S INITIATIVES. HE LISTED FOUR MAIN POINTS WHEN DESCRIBING THE SIGNIFICANT AND PUBLIC CONCESSIONS MADE BY SMITH: (A) THE PRINCIPLE OF MAJORITY RULE AND ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE; (B) A DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION; (C) AND INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY; AND (D) A ZIMBABWEAN DEVELOPMENT FUND. BOTH MEN AGREED THAT THE IMPORTANT THING FOR BOTSWANA WAS TO SEE THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM RESOLVED, AND IT WAS APPARENT THAT THEY WERE WILLING TO ACCEPT A VARIETY OF MEANS TO ACHIEVE THIS END. THEY SAID THE JULY 25 LUSAKA MEETING HAD SORELY DISILLUSIONED AND DISGUSTED THE FRONTLINE STATES, ESPECIALLY NYERERE (WHO CAME 180 DEGREES, THEY SAID) VIS-A-VIS THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. THEY EXPRESSED DISTRUST OF THE PF, SAYING IT IS COMPLETELY DISUNITED AND NKOMO AND MUGABE NOT AT
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ALL PREPARED TO ASSUME RESPONSIBLE GOVERNING ROLE. THEY VOICED THE FEAR THAT HANDING POWER TO THE PF WILL INEVITABLY BRING CIVIL WAR IN ZIMBABWE. LEGAWAILA SUMMED IT UP BY SAYING "WHY SHOULD THE RHODESIANS WIN POWER FROM ONE SMITH ONLY TO GIVE IT TO ANOTHER (BLACK) SMITH?". LEGWAILA AND MOGAMI EXPRESSED (TOTALLY UNSOLICITED) SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA OF AN "INTERNAL SOLUTION" INVOLVING MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE, BUT EMPHASIZED THAT IT MUST BE GENUINELY DEMOCRATIC BASED ON FREE ELECTIONS. THEY WOULD EVEN ACCEPT A QUALIFIED FRANCHISE. THEY THOUGHT MUZOREWA HAD A VERY LARGE POPULAR FOLLOWING, DESPITE HIS CRITICS WHO DISCOUNTED HIS MASS RALLIES AS GATHERINGS OF THE CURIOUS OR RELIGIOUS. "200,000 PEOPLE DO NOT TURN OUT JUST TO SEE A BISHOP", LEGWAILA SAID. THEY CONSIDERED THAT THE PRESENT RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES SHOULD BE KEPT LARGELY INTACT (INCLUDING EVEN THE SELOUS SCOUTS), BASING THEIR ARGUMENT LARGELY ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE RHODESIAN FORCES, WHICH ARE TWO-THIRDS BLACK. GIVEN NYERERE'S DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE PF, LEGWAILA AND MOGAMI THOUGHT THE OTHER FRONTLINE STATES WOULD ACCEPT A DEMOCRATIC INTERNAL SOLUTION. ALTHOUGH IT WAS UNCLEAR WHETHER HE WAS REFERRING TO BOTSWANA OR

TO ALL THE FRONTLINE STATES, MOGAMI STATED CATEGORICALLY: "GIVE US ONE MONTH AND WE'LL GO ALONG (WITH AN INTERNAL SOLUTION". FINALLY, LEGWAILA AND MOGAMI AGREED THAT THE LAST THING THE PF REALLY WANTED WAS

FREE ELECTIONS; BY THE SAME TOKEN, THE SOVIET UNION CLEARLY HOPED THERE WOULD BE NO DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN ZIMBABWE.

5. COMMENT:

A. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT BOTH LEGWAILA AND MOGAMI ARE YOUNG, BRIGHT, WELL-EDUCATED AND IN POSITIONS OF GREAT RESPONSIBILITY AND CONFIDENCE. LEGWAILA HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN VERY CLOSE TO PRESIDENT KHAMA, WHILE CONFIDENTIAL

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MOGAMI BY VIRTUE OF HIS FORMER UN POSTING AND HIS PRESENT JOB AS NUMBER THREE IN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (AFTER THE MINISTER AND SECRETARY), IS IN A POSITION OF CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE. MOGAMI, WHILE QUITE FRIENDLY ON A PERSONAL BASIS, HAS IN THE PAST BEEN OUTSPOKENLY CRITICAL OF SOME USG POLICIES; HIS REMARKS WERE THEREFORE ALL THE MORE SURPRISING FOR THE IMPLICIT SUPPORT GIVEN THE FIVE-POWER AND ANGLO/US INITIATIVES.

B. WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING IF LEGWAILA'S AND MOGAMI'S EXPRESSED OPINIONS REFLECT THOSE AT THE HIGHEST GOB LEVEL. WE SUSPECT THAT THEY DO, HOWEVER, GIVEN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE LUSAKA MEETING (AND RESULTING DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE PF) GIVEN TO AMBASSADOR NORLAND BY EXTAFF SECRETARY MPOTOKWANE (SEE REFTEL).

C. WHILE THE TWO GOB OFFICIALS WERE CAREFUL TO SAY THAT AN ACCEPTABLE INTERNAL SOLUTION MUST BE A DEMOCRATIC ONE, IT IS PROBABLY NOT UNFAIR TO EXPECT THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT EVEN THE EXTERNAL TRAPPINGS OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESS FOR THE GENUINE ARTICLE. THE FIRST PRIORITY FOR BOTSWANA IS A QUIET NORTHERN BORDER, FREE FROM THE THREAT OF CIVIL WAR.

D. CLEARLY NYERERE'S SHIFT AT LUSAKA HAS MADE THE GREAT DIFFERENCE, ALLOWING GOB OFFICIALS NOW TO SAY OPENLY WHAT THEY PROBABLY HAVE BEEN THINKING PRIVATELY FOR MANY MONTHS.

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